

# The Extra End

## The Newsletter of the ESMBA



### Committee Profiles

#### **Martin McGregor**

#### **Coaching Director**

I first became involved with coaching in the 1990's when my youngest son joined our local swimming club. I began as a qualified teacher, moved into the assistant head coach role after a year or so then took over as a qualified head coach when the head coach retired. I played short mat bowls with a local social group for the very first time in 2017 having never picked up a bowl before. I soon became hooked on the game and was asked if I would be willing to take over the running of that group, which of course, I have. Who would have, at that time, known the journey I would embark on. I knew I wanted to be the best I could be and be able to fully support new bowlers like me, so I started my coaching journey with Coach Bowls. Rather than bore you with too much detail, that journey that has led me here includes playing in the league of my local bowls club, becoming a level 2 coach, being invited to join the U21 England Short Mat Bowls team as the assistant manager, being a national short mat umpire, and now to being Coaching Director.

### News from the ESMBA

The ESMBA AGM was held at Coventry on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2023, it was preceded by an EGM where the ESMBA Proposal to change the 2 existing general Committee Positions to positions with specific roles, one of 'Vice Chairman' and one 'IT & Social Media Officer' were accepted.

The County Delegates approved some changes to the Constitution, such as changing the Registration deadline to the 30<sup>th</sup> October.

The Delegates also amended the ESMBA's proposed increase of Registration Fees (Inc Personal Accident Cover) from £4 to £5, with a counter proposal of an increase of 50p per year for 4 years, ratified annually. The ESMBA element of Registration Fees will be £4.50 for 2023/24.



Martin McGregor

The majority of the Committee have remained the same, however Brian Baker has stepped down as Coaching Director, but has remained Registrations Secretary. Martin McGregor (Pictured) has replaced him as Coaching Director. Nicky Tresadern has replaced Robin Armstrong as Competition Organiser; however Robin will continue to provide administrative support to Nicky.

Rachel Hedges returns to the Committee as the new IT & Social Media Officer.

There remains one vacancy, that of Vice Chairman: If you know of a suitable candidate in your county Please highlight Page 3 of this newsletter for the Job Description.

### Club Support

The ESMBA have introduced a new feature on the Website – Club Support can be accessed from the Home Page by clicking the image.

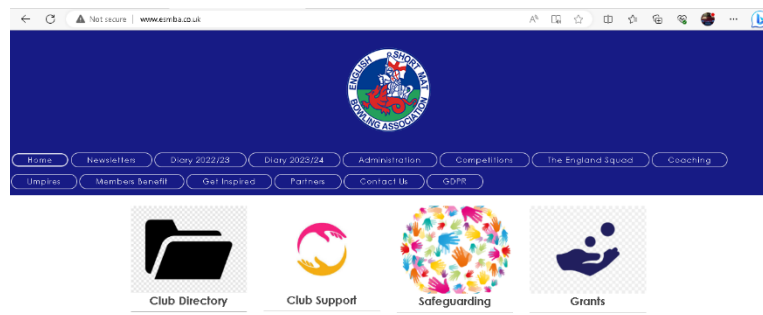
Club Support is designed to help new and existing clubs.

There is a Club Constitution Template, to aid clubs who may need to update or write a constitution.

Safe Club Checklist is there to ensure that your club is going in the right direction and identify any issues that may need immediate or future attention.

ESMBA Social Media Policy – This was approved last year and is designed to ensure Clubs, Counties, and the ESMBA have good practice around the expanding use of Social Media.

Membership form template - guidance on items a good club membership form should include.





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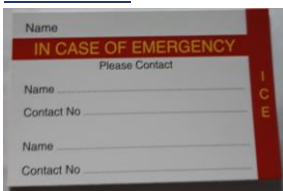
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### Schools Initiative

120 Children took part in a School Games session recently with Short Mat Bowls featuring prominently.



### ICE CARDS



In July 2020 the ESMBA produced and distributed 16000 ICE Cards to all affiliated counties for their members. If you haven't received yours as a member, please contact your county SGO. If, as a county you lost track of them during the Covid lockdown please let [lynn@esmba.co.uk](mailto:lynn@esmba.co.uk). know and replacements can be arranged.

An ICE card, easily kept in your bowls bag, is a simple but effective way of help keep members safe and the emergency services aware of any existing medical conditions. Please ensure you have yours.

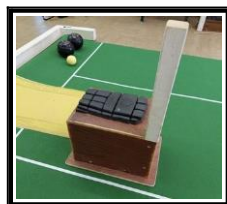
### No Balance, No Problem?!

A little over 2 years ago I started to lose my balance during a bowls match. As I was also experiencing pain and numbness in my feet, I headed to my GP. After many hospital tests, I was diagnosed with a rare neurological condition which causes severe balance issues. I thought my days playing bowls were over.

Coincidentally however, I met with a chap recovering from a nasty stroke, who had just taken up Short Mat Bowls to help him RECOVER his balance!

So we got together to discuss how to overcome our balance problems whilst bowling. Neither of us was disabled enough to require a wheelchair, but equally none of the available bowls stability aids fully met our (balance) needs.

Searching the internet for ideas, I found an **adjustable music stool** (*image right*) with an angled seat which provided excellent stability, and placed us in the perfect position for bowling. I demonstrated it to ESMBA at the National Finals last year and got the thumbs up.



Good as it (music stool) was my friend and I continued to come up with ideas to help with our balance. What about kneeling? Kneeling certainly helps your balance when bowling, but it has one BIG drawback – getting back up! It took two people to haul me back onto my feet.

So we invented a small box with a cushioned top, and a post to help us get up and down. We had invented the Bowls **Kneeling Stool** (*image left*). Again it met with ESMBA approval as a stability aid.

However, even the Kneeling Stool had a problem – repeatedly kneeling down to bowl and up again can take its toll on aging knees! Then we had a brainwave, a simple POST!

What if we had a substantial wooden post somehow fixed to a small base which we could stand on, with our own weight making the post stable? And thus the **Stand Post Bowls Stability Aid** was born. (*image right*)



The prototype was demonstrated to ESMBA Umpires at the National Finals at Melton Mowbray in April 2023 and met with great enthusiasm.

Although we have no intention of trying to manufacture any of these ideas ourselves, they can be easily and inexpensively made by anyone handy with a drill and a jig saw. Alternatively, we are in discussion with the charity 'Men in Sheds' who are interested in taking on this project – making the Stand Post to order.

Watch this space for updates – and get yourself back into bowls even if you have balance issues!

By Bryan Morrice, Barton Town SMBC.





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### WHAT 3 WORDS

Have you heard of 'What 3 Words'?

Every square meter of the world has been given a unique combination of 3 words to identify it.

Has your Club Venue got theirs? If not please ensure it is on the noticeboard to assist the emergency services in finding your Clubs location in the event of an emergency

It can even be used to help visitors navigate to your club!

### Vice Chairman Vacancy

The ESMBA have a vacancy for the position of Vice Chairman, please see the job description below.

- The individual will undertake the following duties with the view that they will take the natural progression and take the Chairmanship of the Association when the time is right.
- To support the Chairman in his/her functions on the day to day running of the Association.
- To shadow and understand the running of each of the Association's departments.
- To collate and update the Association's policy register which will give a greater understanding as to how the Association runs.

If you are interested in this position, please submit a letter outlining what you can contribute to the role and the ESMBA to the General Secretary via email: [admin@esmba.co.uk](mailto:admin@esmba.co.uk) if you have any questions about the role, please contact the Chairman Barry Hedges: [barry@esmba.co.uk](mailto:barry@esmba.co.uk)

### Short Mat Bowls feature in Dorset Spotlight

Short Mat Bowls was recently featured in an Dorset Spotlight Article, for the full article please follow this link [Dorset Spotlight - May & June 2023](#)



**ALEX KLEY**  
SHORT MAT BOWLS  
WORLD SINGLES CHAMPION

In 2013, Alex Kley was introduced to the game of bowls by his friend Ben Riley. After plenty of mickey-taking about him playing an old man's sport, Alex decided to give it a go. Not only did he enjoy it, but he excelled at it.

Ten years on, the 22-year-old from Blandford Forum has won all four major singles titles in Short Mat Bowls, a feat no one has ever achieved in the sport - until now!

Alex is...  
World Champion  
National Champion  
British Isles Champion  
ESMBA (English Short Mat Bowling Association) Open Champion




Alex is not only the World Champion in the world of bowls, but he is also a green keeper at Wareham Golf Club and plays regularly for Puddletown Rugby Club.

Dorset Spotlight chats with Alex about his success in Short Mat Bowls and what is next for the athlete.

DS: Hi Alex, congratulations on winning all four major singles titles in short mat bowls; it's a magnificent achievement. Tell us a bit about the sport - how do you play the game?

ALEX: "In Short Mat Bowls we use the same bowls as other codes, but the game is a quicker version than traditional bowls. It's akin to 20/20 cricket and 7-a-side rugby. In my opinion, it's more fun and therefore enjoyable. The bowls carpet is 45 feet long and 6 feet wide with a wooden block 15 inches wide in the centre, and you are bowling to a positioned jack over a set number of ends. You can play the game in Single, Pairs, Triples or Fours, with the object of the game to ensure your bowls are closer to the jack than your opponents. You can score more than one shot per end depending on how many bowls of yours are closer than your opponent's nearest bowl. The game is easy to learn but hard to master."

DS: How did you get into the sport, and what do you love about it?  
ALEX: "My friend Ben Riley was talking about bowls on the school bus, and I was ripping into him, saying it was an old man's sport! The next thing I know, a few weeks later, I'm playing the game with Ben in the local village hall at Okeford Fitzpaine. I became a member for a few years to learn the trade of bowls before moving on to Hazlebury Bryan to develop further. I love the game of bowls as there are so many ways to play the game tactically, and I've also met some of my best friends from bowls."



DS: What has been the highlight of your career so far?  
ALEX: "It's so hard to pick out one because I can still remember playing my first county match around nine years ago, playing with Steve White and Paul Gough. If I had to choose it must be winning the Singles World Championships - I've never had a feeling like that before! I have a great support network around me, so I would like to thank my Mum and Dad for taking me around everywhere before I could drive, also the people who have taught me bowls and given me the guidance and support. Dorset Short Mat Bowls, England managers, Shortmatplayers Tour, Okeford SMBC, Hazlebury SMBC, Carey SMBC, Steve White, Mark White, Brian Baker, Lynn Dean, Sam Harvey, Rob Martin and Ben Riley."

DS: What is next for the World Champion?  
ALEX: "I've just retained my National Singles Title, so the next thing will be defending my British Isles Trophy."

Follow Alex on Instagram @alex\_kley15



Dorset Spotlight was also delighted to chat with Brian Baker - the England U21 Bowling Academy Manager.

DS: Hi Brian, with five England International players coached out of the village hall in Hazlebury Bryan, it is fantastic to see Dorset is producing some exceptional bowling talent. Tell us about the team and their journey to achieve this success?

BRIAN: "Hazlebury Bryan SMBC believe strongly in opportunities for all, and therefore, we encourage everyone to join in - this leads to a competitive but social mentality. Players are encouraged to play in our league teams at an early stage of their development. We run six teams in 3 leagues, which allows players to play competitively as much as they wish. We arrange coaching sessions with a qualified (First for Sport) level 2 bowls coach and develop each player accordingly. Apart from the main England team members, we have two England Under-21 players and two members in an England Ladies Team. Our youngest member is 12, and our eldest 80 plus - a club for all."

DS: Alex Kley is a tremendous success in the bowling world. What do you think it is about him that has propelled him to the top of his game?

BRIAN: "His attitude is exemplary - win or lose, it is the same. Alex has no fear. If he makes a bad shot, he believes his next shot will be a good one and get him out of trouble. His belief in his ability is strong, but his overall riding factor is his consistency, practice, and stamina. To win a major title, you bowl for over 8 hours during the day."

DS: Are you looking at recruiting some more young players? If so, do you have any vacancies to join local teams?

BRIAN: "We are always looking for new bowlers, whether they are still at school or adults looking for a hobby - which is social and active. Apart from the many clubs Dorset SMBA run Tuesday night training sessions at Dorset Bowls Resort, and anyone is welcome to give it a try."

To be put in contact with your local club - please contact Brian by email at [brian@esmba.co.uk](mailto:brian@esmba.co.uk) or telephone 01250 817432.



BRIAN BAKER

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## Coaching Corner



**Introducing Coaching Corner, in each issue we will include a task for players to try.**

In this issue the task is: Draw to beat both Bowls on both hands

1 point for each bowl that becomes shot (maximum of 4 points available)

